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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6829

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1405

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 8066

RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0738

RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 4441

RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 1462

RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 4717

RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 7417

RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 0006

RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY 1727

RUEHBD/AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN PRIORITY 0982

RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 1980

RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 9269

RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 7426

RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 0732

RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 6914

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFIS/USFJ PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 002381

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/15/2019

TAGS: PREL ETRD ELTN CH JA

SUBJECT: EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY: TRANSPORT MINISTER
REASSURES AMBASSADOR ON POSSIBLE U.S. INVOLVEMENT

REF: TOKYO 2329

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James P. Zumwalt,
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Participation by the United States is crucial in any East Asian Community concept, Cabinet member Seiji Maehara (Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; State Minister for Okinawa, Northern Territories and Disaster Prevention; and Space Minister) told the Ambassador in an October 14 meeting. The Minister reiterated the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance for stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The Ambassador and Maehara discussed opportunities for economic cooperation and a common desire for increased development in Okinawa. End summary.

Importance of U.S.-Japan Alliance

¶2. (C) Minister Maehara told the Ambassador that in his 16-year career has an elected official, his "life's work" is diplomacy and security. It is crucial that Japan and the United States sustain and maintain the alliance; even with a change in government, the two countries must share a close relationship. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries have deep trust and high expectations for the U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific region, and believe stability and security in Asia is due in large part to a strong U.S.-Japan alliance, Maehara asserted.

East Asian Community

¶3. (C) The East Asian Community (EAC) concept announced by Prime Minister Hatoyama during the UNGA in New York City would be "impossible" to achieve if it excludes the United States, a point he repeated several times during the meeting.

The Ambassador welcomed Maehara's statements as "reassuring," and encouraged him to "continue on that path." Minister Maehara added that press reporting from China and Korea misrepresented statements by Prime Minister Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Okada.

Economic Cooperation; Okinawa Issues

¶4. (C) With reference to the DPJ campaign manifesto that called for a U.S.-Japan free trade agreement (FTA), Minister Maehara said he supports strengthening economic ties between the world's two largest economies. Close economic cooperation will provide a "win-win" situation for both countries, which would extend to Asia as well. The Ambassador said that in addition to the security alliance, he hopes the U.S. and Japan can create other opportunities for cooperation, including on economic issues. Noting discussion on Okinawa tend to focus on Futenma, the Ambassador expressed his interest in helping strengthen the economy of Okinawa and also in cooperating with Japan on technology and innovation (e.g., a "mini-Silicon Valley" in Japan). Minister Maehara thanked the Ambassador for his interest in Okinawa. Observing that Okinawa has the nation's lowest average income and highest unemployment rate, Maehara stated that while U.S. bases could be hampering progress in Okinawa, at the same time they offer stability and serve an important role supporting the U.S.-Japan alliance.

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¶5. (SBU) The meeting also included brief discussion of transport issues, reported septel.

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